

## Eugène Yourassowsky

Eugène Yourassowsky died on 12th March 1994 at the age of 64.

He graduated from the Faculté de Médecine of the Université Libre de Bruxelles in 1955 and trained in tropical medicine in Antwerp before enrolling in 1956 for a 3-year civil service at the Government Hospital in Ruhengeri, Rwanda.

He was fascinated by Africa where he became truly acquainted with infectious diseases. There, he realized the importance of the laboratory for diagnosis, treatment and epidemiological studies of these illnesses.

Back in Brussels in 1959, he first worked as an assistant in the Department of Internal Medicine at the Brugmann University Hospital and trained in clinical microbiology.

In 1961, he became full-time Assistant in the Department of Clinical Biology of Brugmann University Hospital where he rapidly built an excellent laboratory of bacteriology with a productive research team specializing in the study of the mode of action of antimicrobial agents. By 1964, he was recognized as a specialist in clinical biology and he obtained his Ph.D. in 1968.

Thanks to his clinical background, Eugène Yourassowsky, who soon became the Belgian specialist in antimicrobial therapy and a very respected advisor for the Ministry of Public Health, always promoted dialogue between clinicians and microbiologists. His gift for working with students and junior scientists was famous and in 1972, he was appointed Professor of Infectious Diseases at the Université Libre de Bruxelles. The same year, he accepted the invitation to chair the Department of Clinical Biology at the Brugmann University Hospital.

His years at the Faculté de Médecine and at the Brugmann University Hospital were marked by a revival of the medical graduate and postgraduate programs and a substantial increase in research potential.

During his brilliant and influential career, Eugène Yourassowsky published over 300 original articles and contributed to textbooks on clinical microbiology and



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infectious diseases. He served as scientific advisor for a number of national and international scientific organizations and chaired and helped organize many scientific conferences. He sat on several editorial boards and was one of the founding members of the European Society of Clinical Microbiology.

His knowledge and love of music, his interest in art, French impressionism in particular, his deep appreciation of literature and his gift as an artist, together with his outstanding career as a medical scientist and teacher, explained his tremendous charisma. Students revered him and he was indeed both the motor and promotor of several gifted students who now form the new generation of Belgian leaders in clinical microbiology and infectious diseases.

We mourn the loss of a much-loved grand figure of Belgian clinical microbiology and extend our sympathies to his wife Francine and his four children.

**The Belgian clinical microbiologists**